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PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

The Preliminary Information Form (PIF) constitutes an application for preliminary consideration of a property for eligibility for the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The PIF is **not** the same as a nomination to the Registers, but is a means for evaluating the **eligibility** of a property for listing. The PIF is evaluated by Department of Historic Resources (DHR) staff and the State Review Board and their recommendations regarding the property's eligibility will be provided to the property owner in writing.

Before Preparing a PIF

Contact DHR's Archivist for assistance in obtaining any information DHR may have on file about your property, such as a previous architectural survey record or eligibility evaluation. You are welcome to use this information in preparing your PIF. Contact DHR's Archivist by phone at (804) 482-6102, or by email at Quatro.Hubbard@dhr.virginia.gov.

Staff at one of DHR's three Regional offices are available to answer questions you may have as you begin preparing your PIF. Locations and contact information for each office is at http://dhr.virginia.gov/regional_offices/regional_offices.htm. (You also are welcome to ask DHR's Archivist for the contact information.)

Preparing a PIF

A PIF consists of three equally important parts:

1. **Form:** Complete the attached form to the best of your ability, using your own research about the property to be evaluated as well as any information that DHR has provided. Remember that DHR's Regional staff also are available to assist you. The form may be completed using Microsoft Word software, typed, or hand-written. If using MS Word, the PIF can be submitted via CD, email, ftp, or other file sharing means.

Your PIF will not be evaluated if it is missing any of the following information:

- Property owner's signature
 - Contact information for the person submitting the form (if different from the property owner)
 - Contact information for the City Manager or County Administrator where the property is located
2. **Photos:** Provide color photographs of your property's exterior and major interior spaces, with emphasis on architectural features instead of furnishings. Photos typically include views of the main building from all sides, as well as important ornamental and/or functional details; any outbuildings or secondary resources; and the property's general setting. Submit photo prints on 4" x 6" glossy photo paper and digital images on CD or other file sharing means approved by DHR's Regional staff.
 3. **Maps:** A minimum of two maps must accompany your PIF:
 - **Location map:** This map shows the exact location of your property. The map can be created using Google Maps, Google Earth, Bing, or other mapping websites. A copy of a road map also may be used as long as the property's exact location and physical address are shown on the map. DHR's Archivist can assist in providing an acceptable location map with boundaries.
 - **Sketch map:** This map shows the locations of all resources on your property, such as the main building; any secondary resources (often referred to as outbuildings); major landscape features such as a stream, formal gardens, driveways, and parking areas, and the road on which the property fronts. The sketch map can be drawn by hand, or an annotated aerial view, tax parcel map or survey map may be used.

Submitting a PIF

Once you have completed the PIF, submit it to the appropriate Regional office. The Regional staff member will inform you when DHR staff will review your PIF and answer any questions you may have about the evaluation process.

Note: All submitted materials become the property of DHR and will be retained in our permanent Archive. In addition, the materials will be posted on DHR's public website for a period of time during the evaluation process.

*Thank you for taking the time to submit this Preliminary Information Form.
Your interest in Virginia's historic resources is helping to provide better stewardship of our cultural past.*



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) _____

Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

We are seeking an evaluation of the property known as the Doctors Building, which includes 990 Main Street and its annex at 108 Holbrook Street, to highlight the history of this mid-century International Style building. Currently a non-contributing property of the Danville Historic District (Old West End and Millionaires Row), the Doctors Building merits its own evaluation as a historic resource. The Doctors Building reflects the mid-twentieth century history of local civil rights, health facility design after World War II, and the national movement of decentralization in urban planning. Evaluation and nomination of this property would support redevelopment efforts for the Doctors Building through the Historic Tax Credit program.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes ☒ No _____

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes _____ No ☒

1. General Property Information

Property name: _____ The Doctors Building _____

Property address: 990 Main Street and 108 Holbrook Street _____

City or Town: Danville _____

Zip code: 24541 _____

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Danville _____

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building ☒ Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: _____ 1.41 _____

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban ☒ Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

Although separate, the two buildings of this property – a main office building at 990 Main Street and annex at 108 Holbrook Street – are collectively known as “The Doctors Building” and differentiated by their respective addresses. Built between 1957 and 1960, the Doctors Building stands on a 1.41-acre site at the east corner of Main Street and Holbrook Street, bounded to the north by Chambers Street. Main Street is the primary street within the Danville Historic District and features ornate houses and churches. 990 Main has two main entrances: one on Holbrook Street and one facing Chambers Street. Shaded with mature oaks, the Chambers entry is a

drive-up with a paved drive that leads to the rear parking lot. The Holbrook entrance is accessed via a concrete walk from the public sidewalk.

108 Holbrook stands at the rear of 990 Main at street level on a sloping paved lot. The building is flanked to the front and the rear by asphalt parking areas, with its front Holbrook Street parking bordered by a public sidewalk with two curb cuts. A concrete walk connects the Holbrook entrance vestibules and curves around the southern end of the building to a flight of concrete stairs, which connects the east and west ends of the lot. The walk continues around the rear elevation facing Chambers Street. A concrete retaining wall forms the southern lot boundary of 108 Holbrook.

The Doctors Building retains integrity in its exterior and in its setting as it occupies its original site at the corner of two major residential neighborhoods, the Holbrook-Ross Street Historic District and the Danville Historic District (Old West End), both listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The residential neighborhoods surrounding the Doctors Building feature mainly Victorian, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate and Queen-Anne style residential structures with dates of significance between 1830 and 1940. Though it is a non-contributing building, the Doctors Building stands within the Danville Historic District and the District ID numbers for these properties are 108-0056-0256 for 108 Holbrook and 108-0056-0161 for 990 Main Street.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): International Style

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Undocumented, but noticeably similar to buildings designed by a mid-century Danville architectural firm, Ragland & Thompson

If the builder is known, please list here: Lanier (P.L.) Anderson

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1957-1960

Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

The Doctors Building was built at 990 Main Street in 1957 as a complex of nine private doctors' offices and a pharmacy.¹ Constructed by a premiere local contractor, Lanier Anderson, the building at 990 Main is a streamlined three-story brick building in the International Style with a flat roof and smooth brick veneer in a stretcher bond pattern. The exterior is accented by cast stone frames that band around each floor and encircle each window of the building. The windows are grouped aluminum awning windows with four sets of paired four-awning windows. The main east and west entrances feature cast-concrete porticos with pierced square motifs along the sides. The porticos on both the east and west sides lead to aluminum-framed double glass doors. Fixed, nine-light aluminum windows are set over these main entrances and aluminum letters that spell "Doctors Building" are mounted above the nine-light windows between the second and third floors. Smaller aluminum letters spelling "Doctors Building" and the address are also featured on the south side of the building facing Main Street between the first and second floors.

At the rear of 990 Main stands the annex at 108 Holbrook, a 40-foot by 90-foot split-level office building constructed in 1960.² 108 Holbrook follows the similar unadorned International Style of 990 Main. The building is an eleven-bay, two-story, rectangular building with a flat roof and a brick veneer in a stretcher bond pattern. The smooth brick exterior is accented by four-awning aluminum windows arranged in horizontal bands on the front elevation facing Holbrook Street. Cast concrete trim surrounds each group of windows. The main Holbrook entrances are situated within two evenly spaced two-bay aluminum and glass vestibules. The single-leaf wood doors are capped by single-light transoms. Aluminum letters that spell "Doctors Building" and the address are mounted on the exterior wall surface between the first and second floors of the Holbrook Street entrance. The one-story rear elevation is divided into three sections. Single-leaf metal doors situated beneath cast-concrete slab awnings are centered on each section. The entrances and the flanking aluminum awning windows are grouped on each section by cast-concrete trim. The exteriors and finishes of 990 Main and 108 Holbrook have been relatively unaltered since their original construction.

The original 1957 interior plan of the Doctors Building at 990 Main reflected the functionality of healthcare facilities in the mid-twentieth century, complete with a pharmacy, exam rooms, offices for secretaries and physicians, and consultation areas for patients. The Doctors Building also included the Professional Pharmacy, a local chain pharmacy chain that took up a large portion of the first floor facing Chambers Street until the 1970s. Since construction, the Doctors Building and annex at 108 Holbrook have been used as private medical offices offering pediatric and dental care as well as ophthalmology, optometry and otolaryngology services.

¹ "New Doctors Building Cost Is \$230,000," The Bee, December 12, 1956, 1.

² "Building Lag Shows No Sign of Picking Up," 1-2.; The City of Danville Inspections Division archives, 990 Main Street file
Department of Historic Resources

The first floor of 990 Main features two main entrances of single-leaf interior doors that open onto two small interior vestibules. The vestibules lead to a central corridor that runs on the building's east-west axis. At the center of the lobby on the north side is the original stainless-steel elevator with a curved surround. Doors leading to office suites in the north and south office wings flank the common corridor on all levels. The immediate interior still features streamlined stairs leading to the second and third floors. Original monumental double-height aluminum windows illuminate the western and eastern staircases landings. The base of these two windows are accented by green marble benches on the staircase landings between the second and third floors on both the western and eastern sides. The second and third floor were similarly situated as the first with a central corridor connecting both staircases. Original vinyl composition tile flooring can be found throughout the building. While the original floor plan in the north and south office wings has been reconfigured over the years, the original common corridor, entry ways, lobby, elevator, and stairs remain intact. The basement, accessible from the interior first floor from the western vestibule via a staircase, provided additional space for mechanical equipment and storage. The basement is built of concrete floors and cinder block walls that have been unaltered since construction.

The annex at 108 Holbrook Street, built in 1960, originally featured exam and operating rooms, private offices, and reception areas for physicians on the first floor and second floor. Unlike 990 Main, which had been constructed in 1957, 108 Holbrook did not feature segregated waiting rooms, but was fully accessible by both races. On the first floor, the western two entrances opened directly into small reception areas, with treatment rooms and other offices toward the eastern side at the back of the building. Originally, on the second floor, three eastern entrances facing Chambers Street opened into to small reception areas, which followed into a cluster of offices and exams rooms moving towards the western front of the building. Vinyl composition tile flooring tile can be found throughout the building.

As is customary in medical offices, interior alterations were frequent as new physicians joining the doctors group designed their offices to suit patients' needs and trends in healthcare. Beginning as soon as 1967, extensive remodeling took place in 990 Main when a 12-foot by 30-foot brick and concrete addition was placed on the north side of the building. Building permit records with the City of Danville show that further renovations took place in 1973, 1986, and in 1990, following the sale of the Doctors Building in 1988 to Fred B. Cornett, an oral surgeon and one of the original founders. In the annex at 108 Holbrook, city records show interior offices were reconfigured at fairly regular intervals in 1971 and in the 1980s.³ In 1999 the Doctors Building was sold again to Samuel Kushner, who, after the building's gradual decline, sold the Doctors Building to its present owner in 2018. The three remaining physicians vacated the building early the next year. Until 2019, the building served one sole function as a healthcare facility. Though vacant today, there are plans for redevelopment of the building.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

One small brick veneer utilities shed is located on the Doctors Building site on the Chambers Street side; this shed is estimated to have been constructed around the same time as the main construction of 990 Main Street in 1957 or 1960.

³ The City of Danville Inspections Division archives, 990 Main Street and 108 Holbrook Street files; Cornett, Cornett Interview.
Department of Historic Resources

4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

Since its 1957 construction, the Doctors Building has occupied a pivotal location in Danville, Virginia's geography and history. Located across Main Street from the Sutherlin Mansion—where the last cabinet meeting of the Confederacy was held in April 1865—and at the entrance to the historically black professional neighborhood of Holbrook-Ross, the Doctors Building offers a fuller narrative of Danville, Virginia that includes the history of civil rights, the post-WWII expansion of public health and medical care, and the mid-twentieth century evolution of urban planning. This property is also one of Danville's last remaining examples of mid-century professional buildings in the International Style and thus contributes to Danville's and Virginia's mid-twentieth century architectural history.

Despite being cloistered among Victorian residential homes along Danville's Millionaires Row, the Doctors Building reflects a key departure away from the values of an Old South based on white tobacco wealth. Built in the waning years of Jim Crow segregation in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Doctors Building anticipated integration and was in fact a pioneer in providing access to both black and white residents. In its first three years, 990 Main's segregated waiting rooms fell in line with the expectations of a system of racial segregation, which was tolerated until 1965 even by health facilities built with federal funds from the Hill-Burton Act.⁴ Despite having segregated waiting rooms in its early years, the Doctors Building was one of only a few public buildings on Main Street that black residents could freely enter. Traditionally, whites-only establishments occupied Main Street, the arterial road of Danville's historic core that runs from the Downtown District south to the Danville Historic District. Churches, commercial buildings and residences that did not serve the perceived prominence of Danville's Anglo-Protestant residences were often placed on side streets off from Main, such as Holbrook Street, where the black professional neighborhood of Holbrook-Ross developed, or Sutherlin Avenue, where the Jewish Temple Beth Shalom was set back a block from Danville's Main Street. The 1957 Doctors Building, however, disrupted this Anglo-Protestant pattern, broadening access to all Danvillians to Main Street.

The history of the Doctors Building site showcases its departure from the typical white wealthy residential neighborhood—and the values of an old tobacco South—surrounding it. The Doctors Building was built on a site originally owned by Armstead Brown Chambers, a local tobacconist in the 1850s. After Chambers's death, the site was auctioned off for further development in 1879. According to a local newspaper account, a group of freed black men in the nearby Holbrook-Ross neighborhood had planned on building a church on the site but the group was outbid at the auction for the property by a white tobacconist, Thomas Jefferson Patrick. Patrick later divided and sold the land to two other local tobacconists and manufacturers, Charles Conrad and James Pritchett. In the 1880s, Conrad and Pritchett built large residences on the site in the 1880s in a Queen Anne style to complement Danville's fashionable "Millionaires Row," an impressive swath of tobacconists' homes that line Main Street just south of the downtown area. After Conrad's early death in the 1890s, his property was sold to Richard Louis Dibrell, the founder of the internationally renowned tobacco processing and brokerage firm of Dibrell Brothers. When Richard Dibrell died in 1920, he left the home to his widow, Mary Boyd Dibrell.

When Mary Dibrell died in 1955, her heirs sold the home to a private doctors group. Incorporated as the Doctors Building, Inc., this group of nine doctors razed the Dibrell residence soon after the sale to make way for a "modern and functional building" that would include various offices for their private practices and a

⁴ Quadagno, "Promoting Civil Rights through the Welfare State," 79–80.
Department of Historic Resources

pharmacy.⁵ The founding doctors involved in the purchase and construction of the Doctors Building were Drs. John Clare, Fred Cornett, W. E. Dickerson, Charles Easley, Walter Fitzgerald, Clifford Gaddy, Charles Wilson, H. A. Wiseman, and John Marsella.⁶ These doctors offered a variety of services from oral surgery to ophthalmology and each had his own practice with racially segregated waiting rooms, exam rooms, and private offices. Until the 1970s, the group also shared the first floor of the Doctors Building with the Professional Pharmacy, a company that first advertised their new location at 990 Main Street as “modern in every detail” with service that was “prompt, courteous, and efficient.”⁷

At the same time the doctors group was designing the annex at 108 Holbrook Street, Danville’s first civil rights protests began in 1960.⁸ The main demonstrations occurred across the street from the Doctors Building at the Sutherlin Mansion, the former home of William T. Sutherlin. Sutherlin was a renowned eighteenth-century tobacco tycoon, and mayor of Danville who had hosted Confederate President Jefferson Davis in the waning days of the Confederacy in April of 1865. Sutherlin’s home eventually was saved from demolition in 1916 and turned into Danville’s white public library—the site of some of Danville’s first civil rights protests in April 1960. That spring, several black high school students requested access to the library at the Sutherlin house, citing the inadequacy of Grasty Library, the black public library in the Holbrook-Ross neighborhood. After white librarians refused to allow the black students to use the library, the students staged a sit-in that was backed by the local chapter of the NAACP.⁹ Rather than integrate, the library closed to the entire community over the summer and fall of 1960.¹⁰ Perhaps because the doctors group saw these protests up-close, or maybe because they anticipated the eventual shift towards integration, they quickly adapted with the times. The doctors 1960 annex designs did not include segregated waiting rooms for white and black patients as the 1957 main building had. The Doctors Building’s modern design was progressive in this respect as it anticipated integration well before the Danville public library integrated in 1963 and before 1964 and 1965 legislation mandated that healthcare facilities be integrated.

In its architectural style, the Doctors Building distinguished itself from its more traditional neighbors, such as the Sutherlin Mansion, which had embraced sentiment, celebrating wealth and social power through elaborate styles. Departing from these solidly residential, ornate neighbors, the Doctors Building’s design represented new ideas about healthcare and the design of healthcare facilities. While the form of the Doctors Building maintained the integrity and scale of the residential neighborhood—with its three-storied main building and similar setback from the street—its design was a pioneering change. Through its unadorned International Style, the Doctors Building aimed to be “dignified and well-balanced” as well as functional and efficient, reassuring patients that the care they received within these facilities would be scientifically progressive and rendered by skilled professionals.¹¹ The Doctors Building embraced the minimalist International Style and attitude that would come to dominate healthcare architecture in the United States beginning in the 1950s.¹²

The International Style appeared in Virginian buildings mainly between 1932 and 1960 and was characterized by a streamlined form that resisted identification with a particular person, place or country.¹³ Key elements of the International Style included a smooth exterior, flat roof, and geometric design.¹⁴ Highlighting functionality rather than sentimentality, the International style offered simple, geometric forms that could evoke ideas of modernity and professional distinction. With professionalism and functionality at the forefront of the Doctors Building’s

⁵ Old West End Neighborhood Association, “The Pritchett and Conrad/Dibrell Mansions”; “New Doctors Building Cost Is \$230,000,” 1.

⁶ “Old Dibrell Home to Be Razed for Doctors Building,” 18.

⁷ “The Professional Pharmacy,” 11.

⁸ Many of Danville’s civil rights protests began in the spring of 1960 at the same time as the annex’s design and construction. <http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/cslk/danville/>

⁹ “Council Limits Use of Main Library and Parks to Head Off Further Negro Demonstrations,” 1.

¹⁰ “Council Votes to Close Library System at Close of Day Friday,” 1.

¹¹ Cronin, M.D., “Rehabilitation Facilities and the Hill-Burton Amendments,” 7–8.

¹² Verderber and Fine, *Healthcare Architecture in an Era of Radical Transformation*, 18, 22.

¹³ Trancik, *Finding Lost Space*, 23–25.

¹⁴ Bezirdjian and McDonald, “New Dominion Virginia, Architectural Style Guide,” 31.

design, the building was, and continues to be, a landmark of a mid-century architectural turn in healthcare facilities.

It was no accident that the International Style became a favored style of these mid-twentieth century health facilities like the Doctors Building. As modern medicine became increasingly in demand and expected by a growing middle-class of Danville residents after WWII, the style dovetailed with the expansion of other medical facilities in the area. A small but bustling city in the pre-war era, Danville grew rapidly throughout the 1950s because of natural population growth and through the city's annexation of highly populated areas of the surrounding Pittsylvania County. By annexing the white textile village of Schoolfield, as well as a historically African American town known as Almagro in the 1950s, Danville's population swelled from just above 30,000 in 1940 to over 45,000 by 1960.¹⁵ The city kept up with demand for expanded services, despite the age of some of its main medical facilities, such as Memorial Hospital on South Main Street. Built in 1926 as "the Home for the Sick," Danville's Memorial Hospital constructed an addition in 1953.¹⁶ The new addition served over 270 patients with "the most modern equipment," making the hospital, as the 1955 city directory boasted, "one of the most up to date in this part of the country."¹⁷ Doctors, too, were recruited by the Memorial Hospital to serve Danville's growing population and demand for modern medical care in the 1950s. With only 57 doctors serving Danville in 1948, their number grew steadily to 71 in 1955 and 81 medical professionals were in the area by 1960.¹⁸

Many of these doctors did rounds at Memorial Hospital and kept private practices in downtown locations such as the Masonic Temple, built in 1921 at 105 South Union Street and the Arcade Building, built in 1912 at 520 Main Street.¹⁹ Both the Masonic Temple and the Arcade Building, however, were not solely dedicated to physicians or dentists, and included a myriad of commercial services. With the expansion of the hospital in 1953, however, dedicated satellite doctors' offices were built to keep up with demand for services. In 1957, the same year the Doctors Building was built, a new "Medical Arts Building" was constructed at 139 South Main, adjacent to Memorial Hospital. Situated just blocks away from Memorial Hospital, both the Medical Arts Building and the Doctors Building were similar in design as well as use. Because many of the private physicians in the Medical Arts and Doctors buildings were connected to Danville's main hospital, their offices at the Medical Arts Building and the Doctors Building offered support for the Memorial Hospital's expansion after WWII. The design of the Medical Arts Building was very similar to the Doctors Building as well. Unlike the Arcade Building and the Masonic Temple, which were firmly rooted downtown in 1910s and 1920s Neo-Classical and Art Deco styles, the Medical Arts Building embraced the simplicity of the International Style. Today, the Medical Arts Building is no longer standing, leaving the Doctors Building as the only remaining medical professional building representative of this 1950s turn in mid-century medical facility design.

Design and construction of public healthcare facilities across the nation also boomed with the Hill-Burton Hospital Survey and Construction Act of 1946. With nearly \$3.7 billion in federal funds given out to localities across the United States between 1947 and 1974, the Hill-Burton Act supplemented total costs for new hospital and public healthcare facility construction.²⁰ The Hill-Burton Act offered matching federal funds to localities for health facility construction and related expenses if these localities constructed their facilities according to certain specifications. These specifications included placing facilities in a residential area for easier access or requiring that facilities agree to provide care to people who were unable to pay. This legislation spurred the development of new and progressive facilities that not only treated illnesses, but also worked towards preventive care in new and sleek professional buildings.²¹

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau., "Danville, Virginia Population Density, 1940. Prepared by Social Explorer."; U.S. Census Bureau., "Danville, Virginia Population Density, 1960. Prepared by Social Explorer."

¹⁶ Hairston, *A Brief History of Danville, Virginia, 1728-1954.*, 67; Liepe, "Danville Hospitals."

¹⁷ "Danville, Virginia City Directory," 1955, xiv.

¹⁸ "Danville, Virginia City Directory," 1948; "Danville, Virginia City Directory," 1955; "Danville, Virginia City Directory," 1960.

¹⁹ Cornett, Cornett Interview.

²⁰ Quadagno, "Promoting Civil Rights through the Welfare State," 74.

²¹ Stevens, *In Sickness and In Wealth: American Hospitals in the Twentieth Century*, 216–19.

With the mid-century rise in popularity of the International Style, it was this style that could best convey the progressive facilities that the Hill-Burton Act hoped to make a reality. As the International Style was paired with federal funds that encouraged the construction of state-of-the art health facilities, the Hill-Burton Act inadvertently married the values of functionality, scientific progress, and efficient care to this modernist architectural style. After the Hill-Burton Act, facilities offering medical care took on this style to convey the professionalism of their practice. In form and function, the Doctors Building in Danville shares similarities with facilities built with Hill-Burton funds. For instance, the Doctors Building was built at the intersection of two residential communities, Holbrook-Ross and the Old West End, a choice location “ideal for their clients.”²² The location was also well in line with typical placements of Hill-Burton facilities in residential neighborhoods. The Doctors Building’s architectural design and location in a residential area demonstrates the powerful effect that the Hill-Burton Act had on health facilities in the United States after World War II.

Besides taking part in a general wave of International Style health facilities, the Doctors Building also reflects the post-World War II movement to decentralize downtown. Like many other cities, by the late 1950s Danville started joining the ranks of what one historian has called “centerless cities” that developed in the mid-twentieth century.²³ During the 1950s through the 1980s, cities lost their centers as downtown commercial and office space retreated to more suburban and residential areas. This retreat was a planned and supported city effort in Danville. Along with the development of suburban shopping centers, the Doctors Building was constructed at a time when Danville’s city government advocated for diffusing the downtown commercial core in favor of “many off-street parking places” and dedicated single-use commercial buildings near residential neighborhoods.²⁴

The timing of the Doctors Building’s construction with Danville’s first city comprehensive plan showcases how the Doctors Building was a pioneer in the planned effort to decentralize downtowns. In 1956, the year before the Doctors Building opened, Danville’s local government completed its first citywide comprehensive plan, undertaken by the professional consulting firm Harland Bartholomew & Associates. Among Harland Bartholomew & Associates’ ideas for urban renewal downtown, their comprehensive plan called for creating more commercial zoning in residential areas, effectively dispersing the downtown commercial core.²⁵ Opened in 1957, the Doctors Building was among the first in Danville to operate under zoning code “R3” recommended by Harland Bartholomew. This zoning designation allowed commercial use in residential districts. Encouraged through the late 1950s and into the 1960s, this zoning designation led to the destruction of many residential buildings along Main Street in favor of commercial buildings. Eventually the radical razing encouraged by the city came to a stop with a local preservationist movement in the late 1960s. This preservationist movement led ultimately to Danville’s designation of its first historic district on the national registry in 1973: the Danville Historic District.²⁶ Within this district, the Doctors Building stands as an emblem of the mid-century national trend away from the downtown core and the decentralization of commercial areas in the United States.

Built at a time of radical change in the mid-twentieth century, the Doctors Building is a preeminent building of architectural and historic distinction. The building is a landmark not only of the rapid changes in medical care and design, but also the revolution of 1950s urban planning that precipitated the decentralization of downtowns. Its prominent location at the corner of Main and Holbrook streets is in direct conversation with both the past—such as the segregated South that the Sutherlin Mansion represents—and the future—which the Holbrook-Ross Historic District represents through the progress of civil rights. The history of the Doctors Building showcases monumental transitions and key departures from the traditional South towards more modern conceptions of integration and expanded access to health. While the Doctors Building’s modernist turn is not unique to Danville, the site is vital to understanding a fuller history of health and community in Danville and the state of Virginia.

²² Cornett, Cornett Interview

²³ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 265–71.

²⁴ “Old Dibrell Home to Be Razed for Doctor’s Building,” 18.

²⁵ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, “The Comprehensive Plan, City of Danville, Virginia,” 41–43.

²⁶ Grant, Gary Grant interview.

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5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Ed Walker

organization: Mid-Atlantic Prospects, LLC

street & number: PO Box 586

city or town: Roanoke state: Va zip code: 24004

e-mail: edwardbwalker@gmail.com telephone: 540 314 2424

Legal Owner's Signature:  Date: 8/13/2019

• • *Signature required for processing all applications.* • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Brent Cochran

Daytime Telephone: 540 597 6914

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Alison Blanton, Architectural Historian & Vice President

organization: Hill Studio

street & number: 120 Campbell Ave

city or town: Roanoke state: Va zip code: 24011

e-mail: ablanton@hillstudio.com telephone: 540-342-5263

name/title: Ina Dixon, Historic Consultant

organization: Storied Capital, LLC

street & number: 333 West Main Street

city or town: Danville state: Va zip code: 24541

e-mail: ina@storiedcapital.org telephone: 703 470 1121

6. Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

name/title: Ken Larking, City Manager

locality: City of Danville

street & number: 427 Patton Street

city or town: Danville state: Va zip code: 24541

telephone: 434-799-5100

Exterior Photos: 990 Main Street











Interior Photos 990 Main Street









Exterior Photos: 108 Holbrook Street







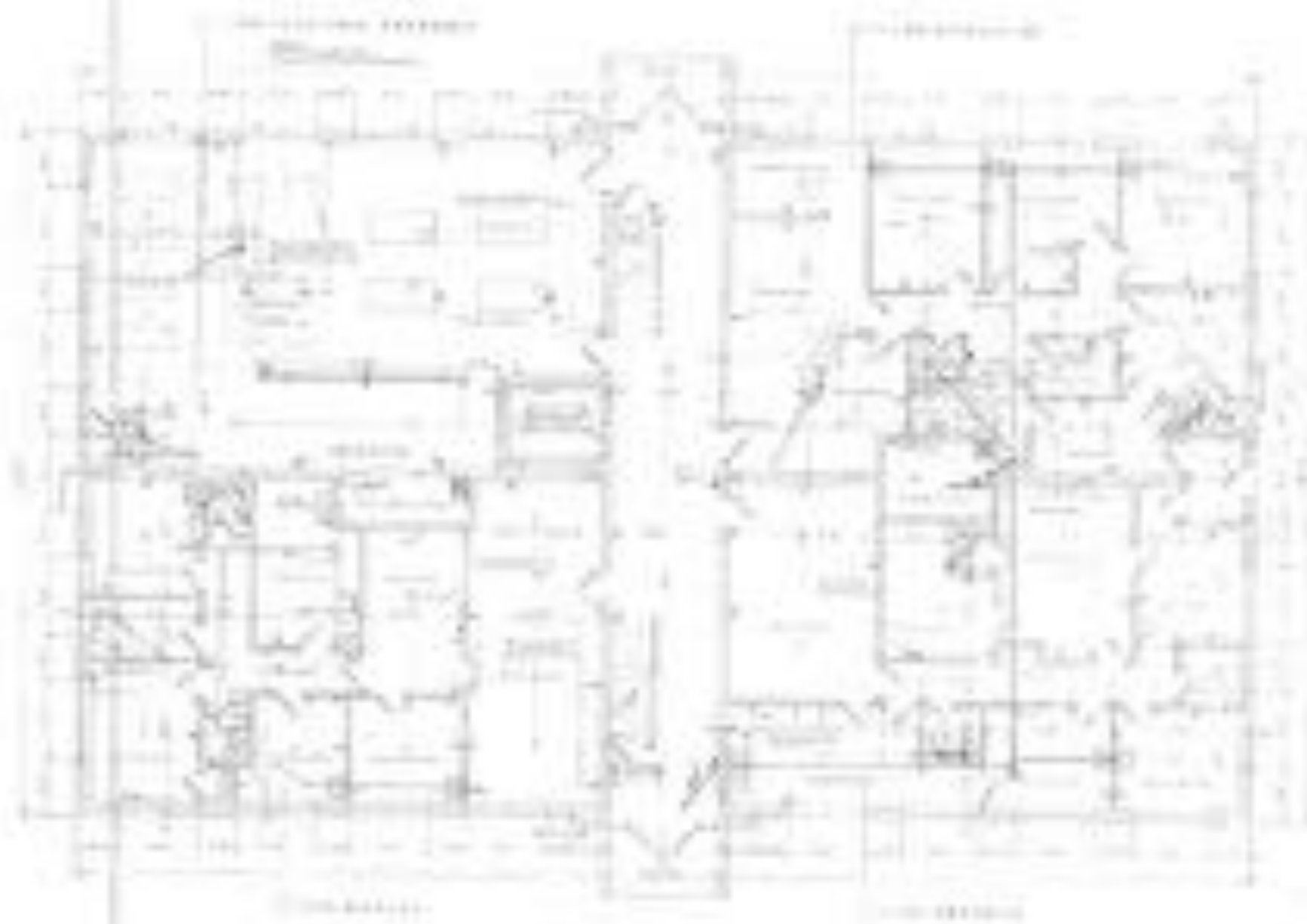
Interior Photos: 108 Holbrook Street





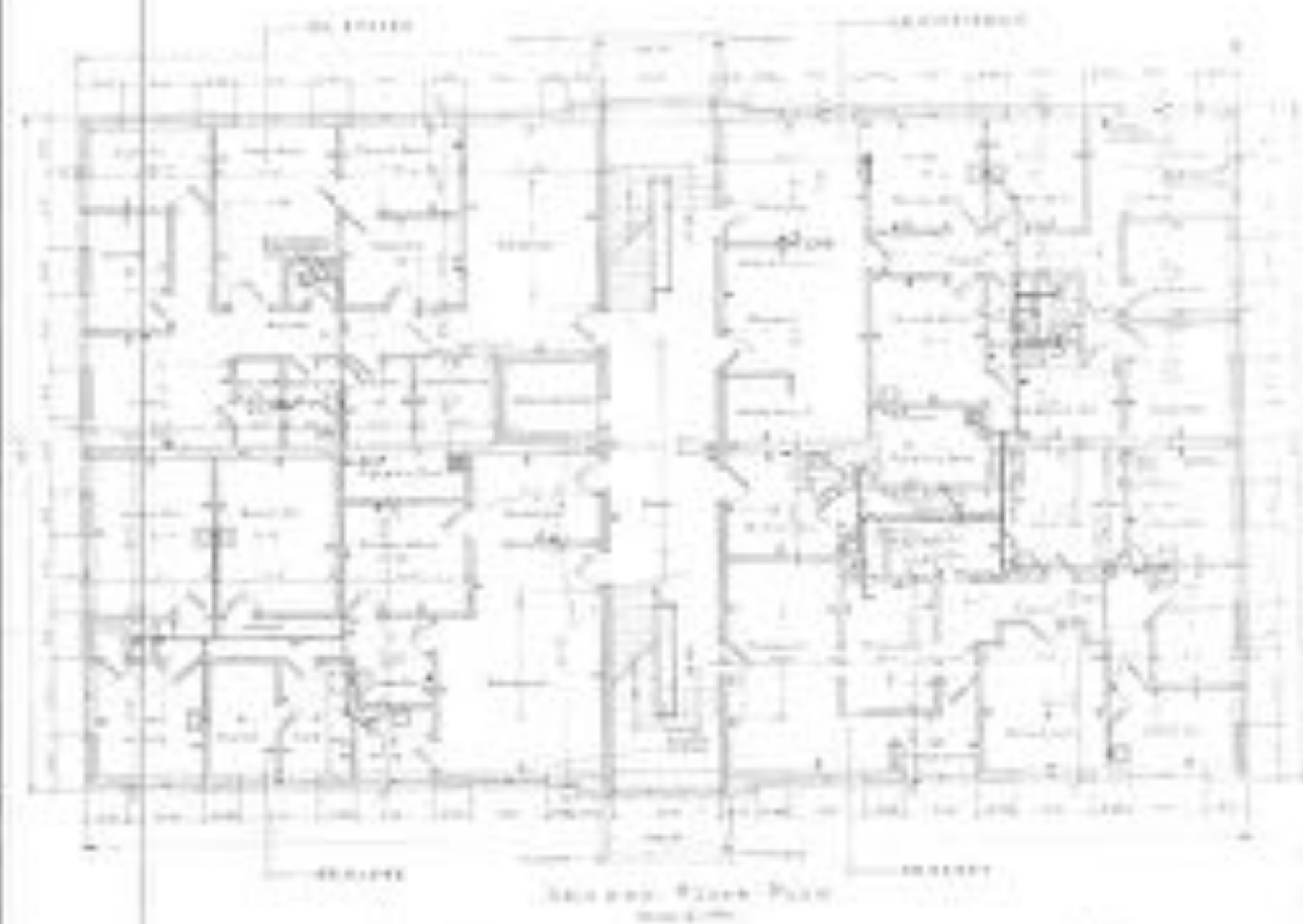






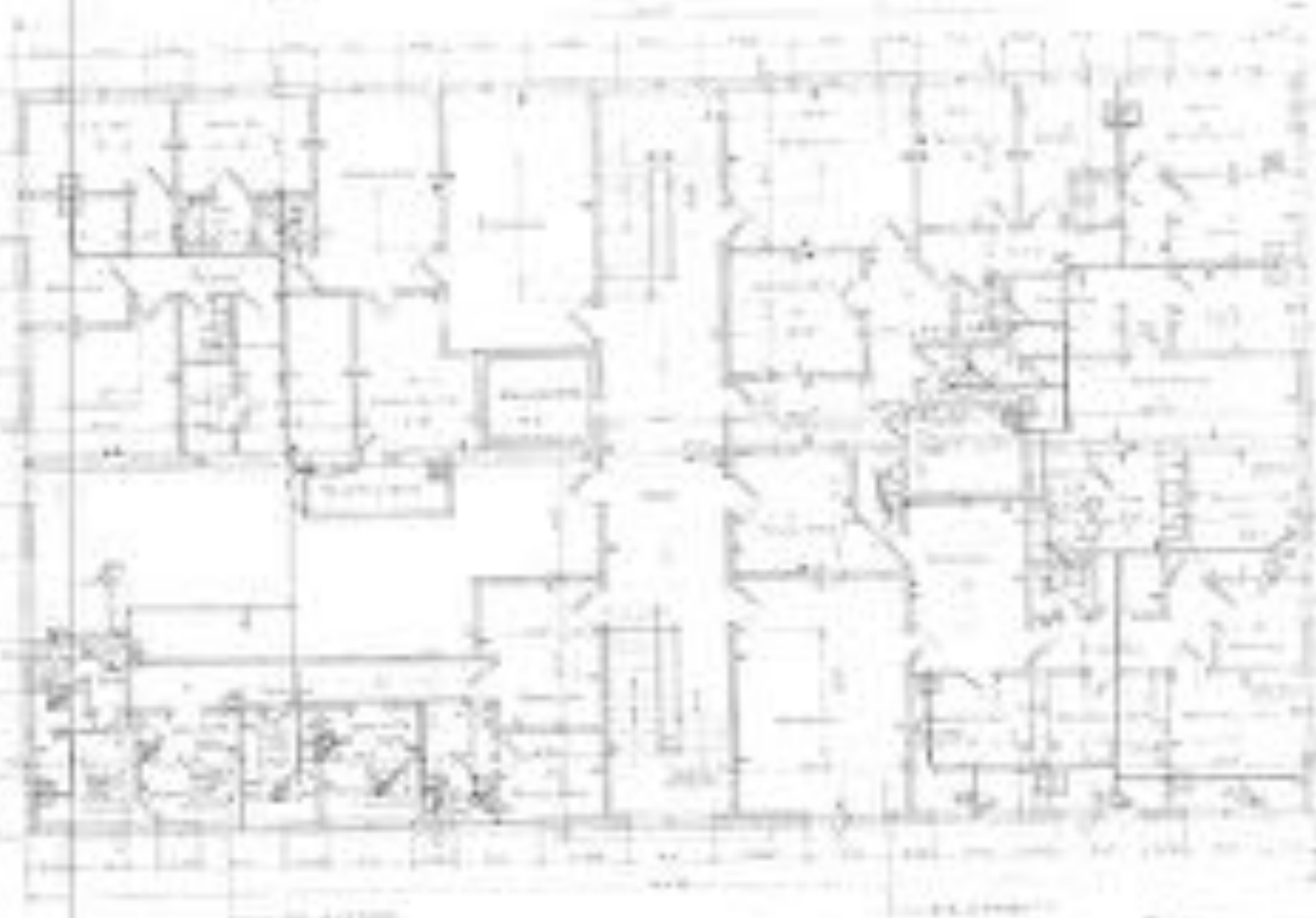
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1/4" = 1'-0"



Architectural Floor Plan

Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



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Handwritten text in a non-English script, likely a title or description of the plan.

Handwritten text in a non-English script, likely a title or description of the plan.



Plan of the building
Scale 1/4" = 1'

